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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 AF-10 ARA-11
EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 NSCE-00 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, ECOSOC, UN
SUBJECT: PRESS CONFERENCE BY G-77 ON COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW) AT UN HEADQUARTERS, SEPT 11, 1978

1. CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE IDRISS JAZAIRY, AMBASSADOR DONALD MILLS (JAMAICA),SPOKESMAN FOR THE G-77, AND VENEZUELAN MINISTER PEREZ-GUERRERO PARTICIPATED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE UN ON SEPT 11 TO DISCUSS THE SUSPENSION OF THE RECENT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW) SESSION. THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS CALLED BY THE GROUP OF 77. THEY PLACED BLAME ON THE UNITED STATES FOR BEING THE ONLY COUNTRY TO NOT AGREE ON PROCEDURE AND MANDATE OF THE COW. AMBASSADOR MILLS PLACED STRONG EMPHASIS ON G-77 INTERPRETATION THAT DISAGREEMENT ON THE MANDATE OF THE COW WAS A RESULT OF AN UNWILLINGNESS OF "ONE DEVELOPED
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COUNTRY" TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN NORTH/SOUTH NEGOTIATIONS. PEREZ-GUERRERO CALLED THE COW BREAKDOWN A CRISIS AND A "CRITICAL SITUATION."

2. CHAIRMAN JAZAIRY OPENED THE PRESS CONFERENCE WITH AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT (TRANSMITTED IN FULL SEPTEL) IN WHICH HE DESCRIBED THE COW'S "ABRUPT END BECAUSE OF

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PERSISTING DISAGREEMENT AS TO ITS MISSION." JAZAIRY
SUMMED UP HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS WITH THREE
POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE PRESENT STALEMATE: "(1) THAT
THERE IS NO POLITICAL WILL FOR MEANINGFULL DIALOGUE;
(2) THAT THE DIALOGUE IS UNDERGOING A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE
SO ACUTE THAT NO REASONABLE FORM OF LANGUAGE CAN OVERCOME
IT; OR (3) THERE IS STILL A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE OF
APPROACH WHEREBY SOME WOULD SEE ITS ROLE AS BEING LIMITED
TO EXCHANGES OF VIEWS, NEGOTIATIONS BEING UNDERTAKEN ONLY
WITH RESPECT TO THE FORMULATION IN WHICH THEY SHOULD BE
COUCHED, WHILE OTHERS WOULD SEE IT AS A DYNAMIC PROCESS
WHICH WOULD OPEN UP NEW AVENUES FOR INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION." JAZAIRY CONCLUDED THAT, WITH THE
NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COULD
RECOGNIZE IN THE COW THE CENTRAL ROLE THE UN HAS TO
PLAY IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

3. A QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD FOLLOWED THE
CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT DURING WHICH JAMAICAN AMBASSADOR MILLS,
SPOKESMAN FOR THE G-77, SPOKE TO THE REASONS FOR THE
STALEMATE, EMPHASIZING AN ABSENCE OF POLITICAL
WILL AS THE MAIN PROBLEM. AS A RESULT OF THE BREAKDOWN
OF THE COW, IT HAD BECOME OBVIOUS TO THE G-77 THAT SOME
COUNTRIES DO NOT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN A DISCUSSION OF
GLOBAL RESTRUCTURING. THE OUTCOME OF THE SEVENTH SPECIAL
SESSION HAD LEFT THE POSITIVE IMPRESSION THAT MEANINGFUL
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NEGOTIATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES COULD TAKE
PLACE BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.
HOWEVER, THE PARIS CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
COOPERATION, UNCTAD, AND NOW THE COW HAD ALL PROVED THAT
THERE WAS AN UNWILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF SOME COUNTRIES
TO NEGOTIATE. WHILE THERE HAD BEEN DISAGREEMENT ON THE
COW MANDATE, THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM GOES MUCH DEEPER AND
CALLS INTO QUESTION THE POSSIBILITY OF MEANINGFUL
NEGOTIATION IN THE COW OR ELSEWHERE.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, JAZAIRY ELABORATED ON
THIS LACK OF POLITICAL WILL BY NOTING WITH SATISFACTION
THAT THE PRESENT IMPASSE WAS NOT A NORTH/SOUTH CONFRON-
TATION. RATHER, ALL DEVELOPED COUNTRIES BUT ONE HAD
AGREED TO THE CHAIRMAN'S ELABORATION AND INTERPRETATION OF
THE COW'S MANDATE. EVERYONE AGREED, UNTIL, DESPITE ITS
GOOD EFFORTS, ONE DELEGATION HAD FOUND THAT IT COULD NOT
GO ALONG WITH AN OTHERWISE UNANIMOUS STATEMENT. THE
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY HAD TAKEN A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE
STAND, HE SAID, AND SHOULD BE PRAISED FOR OVERCOMING ITS
OWN RESERVATIONS.

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5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE, ALL THREE MEN EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE GROUP, AND IN ITS OPEN-ENDEDNESS. IT HAD PROVIDED AN ADEQUATE STRUCTURE, AND THE UNITED NATIONS WAS THE APPROPRIATE FORUM FOR THE DIALOGUE ENVISIONED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COW. THE PROBLEM HAD PROVED TO BE A LACK OF POLITICAL WILL ON THE PART OF ONE COUNTRY, AND WAS NOT AT ALL RELATED TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE BODY.

6. THE FUTURE OF THE COW WILL BE FURTHER DETERMINED BY

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS FALL. JAZAIRY EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THIS ARRANGEMENT, SAYING THAT THE COW'S MANDATE SHOULD HAVE AND COULD HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE ITSELF. MILLS SAID THAT CHANGING THE FORUM DID NOT SEEM TO HIM TO BE A VIABLE OPTION AT THIS POINT, AND THAT RATHER THE GA WOULD HAVE TO BE IN A POSITION TO CLARIFY THE COW MANDATE. PEREZ-GUERRERO CALLED FOR THE GA TO STEP IN AND RECTIFY THE PRESENT CRITICAL SITUATION.

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7. MILLS ENDED THE CONFERENCE BY REPEATING THE G-77 CONTENTION THAT THE SITUATION REPRESENTED A PROBLEM MUCH LARGER THAN DISAGREEMENT OVER THE MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE. RATHER, THIS HAD BECOME THE G-77'S FINAL "MOMENT OF TRUTH." ECHOING HIS MINISTER'S CLOSING REMARKS AT THE COW, HE WARNED THAT THIS WAS ONLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN WHAT WAS GRADUALLY APPEARING TO THE G-77 AS AN INCREMENTAL BREAKDOWN OF THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE. PUTTING THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM INTO A LONGER PERSPECTIVE, MILLS SAID THAT THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION HAD CREATED A GOOD AMOUNT OF HOPE AND FAITH IN THE WILLINGNESS OF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PURPOSE OF REACHING NEW AGREEMENTS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC MATTERS. HOWEVER, CIEC, UNCTAD, THE SUSPENSIONS OF THE COMMON FUND NEGOTIATIONS, AND NOW THE BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, ALL COMBINED TO CAST SERIOUS DOUBT ON THE EXISTENCE OF ANY POSITIVE POLITICAL WILL, PARTICULARLY OF ONE DEVELOPED COUNTRY. WHETHER IT BE IN GENEVA, NEW YORK OR ELSEWHERE, THE CENTRAL ISSUE IS THE SAME AND IS LOOMING LARGER AND LARGER, NAMELY, WHETHER THERE IS OR CAN BE MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATION TOWARDS CONCRETE AGREEMENTS ON MAJOR ECONOMIC ISSUES. THERE IS AN OBVIOUS AND DISTURBING LACK OF POLITICAL WILL WHICH HAS CULMINATED HERE IN NEW YORK IN AN OMINOUS AND GRAVE POLITICAL CRISIS WHICH CASTS THE WHOLE FUTURE OF THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE INTO DOUBT. YOUNG

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